

Rifts, rows and a huge standoff over climate: how the mood soured at Trump's first G20

Anger at the US president's rejection of Paris climate accord and clashes over Washington's stance on trade made for a fractious G20 meeting, despite the touches of conviviality

Anushka Asthana

HAMBURG

It was not all rows and rifts. There were moments of convivial relaxation, such as Friday night's rendition of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 – the official EU anthem – in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie concert hall. As they listened, Theresa May and her husband, Philip, sat close to Donald and Melania Trump, and not far from the new French power couple, Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron. Afterwards the G20 leaders sat down to turkey, buttered spinach, beef and glazed potato wedges, and a fruit dessert. But the night was a rare cultural oasis in the gruelling timetable of the Hamburg G20. The two-day summit, which ended yesterday, had been pitched as one of the most tense get-togethers of world leaders in years. It did not disappoint, with America's president inevitably at the heart of much of the action. Friday's much-anticipated head-to-head with Vladimir Putin went well, in the judgment of the White House, with talks extending amicably well beyond two hours. But Trump, according to one western diplomat, sat with arms folded and a "face like thunder" as he listened to China's president, Xi Jinping, speak on trade during a lunch for leaders. Disagreements between the countries on the question of steel dumping have not been resolved by this latest encounter. As anticipated, the big bone of contention was Trump's decision to withdraw America from the Paris climate agreement. This was still being argued over throughout yesterday, as leaders entered their final sessions. The outcome was a 19-1 standoff pitting the US against the rest of the world, as a joint summit statement noted the US with-

drawal from the agreement, but leaders of the 19 other G20 nations agreed the accord was "irreversible". Macron, the French president, set the increasingly robust tone, snapping at one point that the whole world knew it was a mistake for the US to withdraw from the Paris agreement. Sources said tensions ran particularly high between French and US officials, who also clashed over an attempt by Trump's team to insert a clause into the final communiqué saying the US would support other countries in accessing clean "fossil fuels". At one point talks broke up for two hours while the US and France argued over the climate section, according to a source. In the final hours of the two-day session, Macron asked May and the Australian prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to step out of a working session with Trump to discuss climate change. "There was concern that not being able to agree the language on Paris could hold up the whole summit communiqué," said a diplomatic source. May – who was on a mission to woo the US president on behalf of Brexit Britain – exerted her own pressure on Trump over free trade, insisting that the G20 must reject protectionism if it is to help raise citizens' living standards. In a separate session on the same subject, Macron pulled out his mobile phone and attempted to lecture his US counterpart about the fact that trade is a multilateral issue, not a two-way street, arguing that the device might have been built in the US, but with Chinese parts. Sources said Trump had stepped out of the room during the key sessions, and sources said Macron quipped that the US president was never there when he wanted to address him. One G20 veteran, Tom Bernes, who has held senior positions at the IMF and in the Canadian government, said leaders and officials usually arrived at the summits in a "collaborative spirit". "Sometimes you had a difficult brief, but there was a sense of collaboration,"

said Bernes, who is a fellow for the Centre for International Governance Innovation. "But this time there is the America-first philosophy. Trump's attitude is: 'It is my way or the highway.'" His comments underlined the impression that the US president was a somewhat isolated figure in Hamburg. Many of the most difficult conversations took place in a nondescript room to the side of the leaders' hall where each country sent its appointed sherpa to negotiate the communiqué wording. Their discussions stretched until 3am on the final night, amid the clashes over trade and climate change. As tensions rose, dinners were cancelled and replaced with sandwiches and espresso. One source said the US had come to the table "very late and very aggressively – fighting on all fronts". One source said UK officials had acted as go-betweens during the disagreement between the US and China over alleged over-production of steel, a running sore in talks. At one point there had been a "30-minute row whether something should be 'noted' or 'acknowledged'". For May, wins were seen as getting action on disruption of terror-financing into the communiqué, and collaborating with the EU team on free trade. For the prime minister, this G20 meeting was all about signalling a desire to reach beyond the shores of the EU after Brexit, with trade at the centre of bilaterals with India's Narendra Modi, Japan's Shinzo Abe, Xi, and – of course – Trump. May's 50-minute session with the US president was judged a success by British aides, with May reportedly delighted by Trump's suggestion that a post-Brexit trade deal could be drummed up "very, very quickly". In a longer-than-expected meeting with a "very good atmosphere", May did not raise the US president's comments about the London mayor, Sadiq Khan, nor Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate deal, despite signalling in advance that she would.

Rest-of-world trade talks are a vote of confidence, says PM

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deal with the UK as soon as possible after Brexit. "There is no country that could possibly be closer than our countries," Trump said. "We have been working on a trade deal which will be a very, very big deal, a very powerful deal, great for both countries and I think we will have that done very, very quickly." He added: "Prime minister May and I have developed a very special rela-

tionship and I think trade will be a very big factor between our two countries." May used the two-day summit to focus on possible post-Brexit trade opportunities in one-on-one meetings with non-EU leaders, including China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi, and Japan's Shinzo Abe. "I have held a number of meetings with other world leaders and have been struck by their strong desire to forge ambitious new trading relationships with the UK after Brexit," she

said. "This is a powerful vote of confidence in British goods, British services, Britain's economy and the British people and we look forward to building on these conversations." May said she felt "optimistic" that Trump could be taken at his word. However, some commentators were more sceptical. "It think it is political puffery. There will be no fast US-UK trade agreement," said Thomas Bernes, a former member of the Canadian government who has dealt with the US in a major trade negotiation. "I was involved in

the Canada-US trade agreement and it was extremely complicated. No one will be interested in a trade deal until you know where the UK is vis-à-vis the European Union and until that point is reached you can have plenty of good will but ... nothing more than that." He claimed Trump had failed to understand the complexity of trade deals, as the president would first need to request permission to negotiate from Congress, who would have six months to consider the issue. The final communiqué said: "We take note of the decision of the United States of America to withdraw from the Paris Agreement." It added: "The leaders of

the other G20 members state that the Paris Agreement is irreversible." However, the US did succeed in forcing in a controversial reference to helping countries access fossil fuels in a clean way – to the fury of environmental campaigners. Steve Price-Thomas, Oxfam's director of advocacy and campaigns, said: "With the other 19 members firmly defending the Paris Agreement as 'irreversible', President Trump's stubborn insistence on proping up the fossil fuel industry leaves him isolated and stuck in the past." The communiqué placed a new emphasis on the need for trade deals to be reciprocal and non-discriminatory. It also called for adherence to a rules-based regime and respect for the World Trade Organisation.



Narendra Modi held trade talks with May.



MAY WITH TRUMP

The prime minister met the US president for 50 minutes, with her aides said to be pleased with promises of a 'very, very quick' trade deal. Photograph by Matt Cardy/PA



... AND THE MAYOR

On arrival at the summit, May and her husband Philip were greeted at the airport by their host, the mayor of Hamburg, Olaf Scholz, right. Photograph by Morris MacMatzen/Getty



... AND TURNBULL

The prime minister with Australia's leader, Malcolm Turnbull, and Ivanka Trump at a World Bank session discussing female entrepreneurship. Photograph by Stefan Rousseau/PA



... AND TRUDEAU

May with the Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, right, Angela Merkel, left, and Trump in the group photograph of G20 leaders. Photograph by Carlos Barria/Reuters



... AND ABE

May poses with the Japanese PM, Shinzo Abe. Japan is one of several countries with which the UK was eager to discuss a bilateral trade deal. Photograph by Matt Cardy/PA

Hamburg counts the cost of two nights of violence, looting and destruction

Merkel confirms that victims caught up in anti-globalism protests will be compensated

Philip Oltermann

HAMBURG

When Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and other world leaders boarded their planes at the end of a two-day summit in Hamburg yesterday, they left behind a bruised and beaten city whose historic identity had been shaken to the core.

Two nights of rioting, looting and transport chaos left many residents asking why their government had decided to hold the annual summit of leading economies in a densely populated city with such a strong tradition of counter-cultural protest.

At a press conference yesterday afternoon, Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel was confronted with the suggestion that the chaotic scenes on the conference fringes represented an "embarrassment" on a par with the New Year's eve assaults on women in Cologne.

Merkel pointed out that previous summits had been held in other large cities, such as London and Cannes, and that Hamburg could not have "shirked responsibility". Her deputy, foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, had gone a step further, suggesting that every future G20 should be held in New York, the seat of the United Nations.

When the chancellor had previously argued that her birthplace of Hamburg had been "predestined" to hold the summit, due to its status as a wealthy port city and "beacon of free trade", she had only told half the story.

Like many other European cities with maritime histories, Hamburg also has a strong tradition of anti-establishment culture and annual May Day riots. It is no coincidence that the symbol of the St Pauli district, where many of the last few days' clashes between protesters and police took place, is a skull-and-crossbones flag, or that the local football club refers to its team as "the buccaneers of the league".

An estimated 50,000 people took to the streets for the biggest of several protest marches through the city yesterday. The march, backing Borderless Solidarity instead of G20, managed to bring members of anarchist, socialist, anti-globalisation, green, feminist and Kurdish nationalist movements together in peace, while a smaller, 5,000-strong march, with a less overtly leftwing slogan of "Hamburg shows attitude", walked in a parallel line along the harbour area.

One protester, who would only identify himself as Karl and carried a sign reading "For Africa but without Africa: Huh?", said that he saw the G20 as "a symbol of the richest industrial economies conspiring to make decisions on behalf of the whole world".

Julia Kaiser, a 30-year-old local product designer, said she was marching to protest "for global women's



Passionate G20 protesters take to the streets of Hamburg yesterday. Getty

rights and against everyday sexism". Anne Best, 64, who had also marched in Thursday's controversial "Welcome to Hell" protest, said she had taken to the streets because wealth was not distributed fairly around the globe and the Nato alliance had become a "pact of aggression".

Faced with the suggestion that the march's heterogeneous nature made it harder to define what people were actually protesting about, one demonstrator came up with a swift riposte: "Can you define what the G20 is about?" said Ingo Gesterding, 63.

The violent scenes on the streets of Hamburg over the two previous nights

'Yes to peaceful protest – NO to activism without content' 'Against violence: go away, black bloc!'

Slogans carried by protesters

had left their mark, however. A couple who called themselves Berit and Stefan carried a homemade poster reading "Yes to peaceful protest – NO to activism without content".

After groups of hardcore anarchist activists in black masks and clothing had torched dozens of cars and smashed shop fronts in the Altona district in the early hours of Friday, the action had moved to the city's alternative scene, the Schanzenviertel quarter.

For several hours the 15,000-strong police force in the city appeared to have lost control as masked rioters erected and set fire to barricades, pulled slabs of concrete out of the pavement and looted local shops, including a supermarket, an Apple retail store and a pharmacy.

In particular, the targeting by looters of the Budnikowsky pharmacy, a widely respected family-run chain that has offered apprenticeships to refugees, was widely condemned by local people.

As tensions rose in the city, Ewald Lienen, technical director of FC St Pauli football club, many of whose supporters belong to the leftwing political spectrum, issued a statement via the club's social media channels, appealing for peace on the streets and warning of "another Genoa".

The 2001 G8 summit in the Italian port city was overshadowed by clashes between police and an estimated 200,000 demonstrators, and the death of a 23-year-old Italian anti-globalisation protester, Carlo Giuliani.

Even Andreas Blechschmidt, one of the organisers of Thursday's "Welcome to Hell" march, condemned the rioters' "mindless violence".

Police eventually managed to regain control of the area by the early hours of the morning and extinguished fires burning on the streets. Many protesters were injured, and around 100 have been taken into custody.

Police also confirmed that an officer had fired a live round in the early hours of Friday morning as a warning shot, though the incident had been "unrelated to the protests".

Merkel later condemned the rioters' "unrestrained violence" but she also partly acknowledged responsibility by confirming victims of the last few days' riots would receive compensation from the state.

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Let May stay at No 10 for the summer, top Tories tell MPs

by Michael Savage
Policy Editor

Senior Tories are urging MPs to back away from provoking an early party leadership contest this summer, after claims that some want to see David Davis take charge.

Some MPs are keen to see Davis replace Theresa May, claiming that the prime minister is so wounded that she cannot continue in office for long, and

that the party should draw a line under its disastrous election result.

However, senior figures in the party are now issuing warnings that it would be wrong to remove May too soon. Calmer heads are urging restraint, warning that it would be hard to engineer the coronation of Davis – and that unleashing a messy Tory leadership contest could be disastrous for the party.

One senior Tory said there was frustration among a small group of MPs

and junior ministers that needed to be reined in: "I'm encouraging everyone to go on holiday. It cannot be now – there are some who want it to happen before the end of July, but it is not in the interests of the party. We need to go away, have a holiday and address it in the autumn. There are a lot of conversations going on about when she should go, not if she should go."

Davis has been cited by some MPs as the best caretaker candidate, but several allies of the Brexit secretary said that he was not involved in any planning for the leadership. "The fact is David is just getting on with his job," said one. "He's got the most important ministerial job that anyone has had since the second world war. Obviously a lot of MPs are coalescing around him

because the task of the Tory party is to deliver Brexit and take on Corbyn, and he is superbly qualified to do both – but he is not plotting. There are a bunch of junior ministers who are plotting."

Overall, there is little appetite among Tory MPs for a leadership contest and even less enthusiasm for an election, which most believe the party would lose. Tory whips have been on alert for any leadership plotting, but are said to have found no evidence of a groundswell of support for the idea of an early contest.

One minister said: "The ball is in [May's] court. If, over the summer, she says, 'I can't do this, I'm going to go', then OK, we have a leadership contest. But unless she does that, then she stays, and her punishment is to see through

Brexit. She has to get on with it and show a bit of resolve."

There is also a significant group of newer MPs who believe that their generation should be given time to emerge as possible leadership material.

Allies of the prime minister pointed to her public comments suggesting she had no intention of stepping aside. She told the Conservative summer party that the party must not "lick our wounds" after the election. She said last week that the party must be "bold, not timid" – taken as a sign that she wanted to stay in power for some time.

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